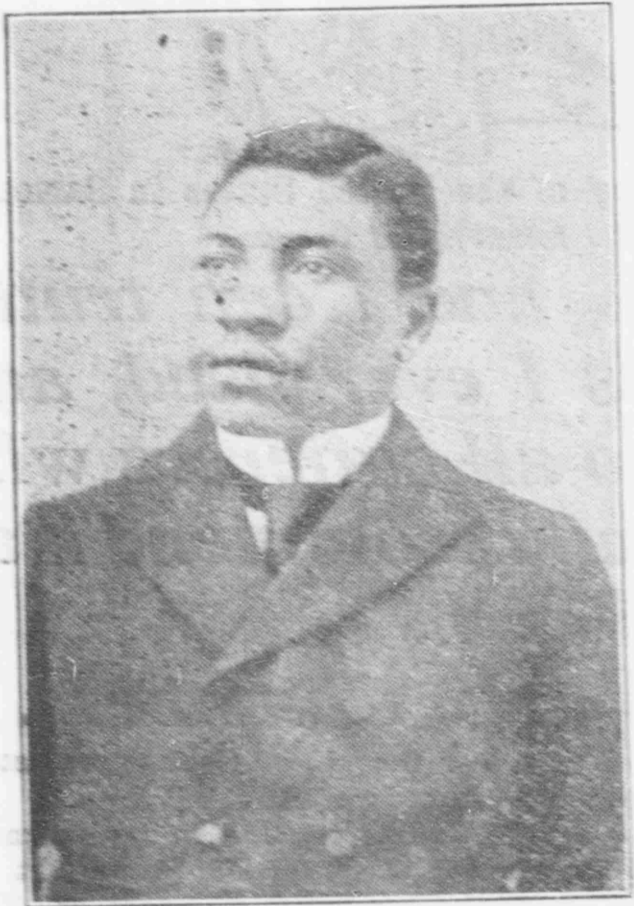


THE MINISTERS' WORK.

Dr. Nixon Tells of the Work and Tribulations of the Followers of the Lowly Nazarene—The Theological Department of Howard University.

"Influence" is defined to be "authority or power derived from superiority of position, rank, talent, etc." To act upon with direct or impulsive power." In connection with the Theological Department of Howard University, I wish to use the word to mean the good that this department has done for the world through the work of its graduates.

In the first place the institution is non-sectarian. Hence, in its class room there are to be found men of any or all denominational holdings. It welcomes all races, creeds or conditions to a careful study of God's word and a proper preparation for rightly dividing the same to all with whom they may come in contact. This department was organized and set into operation about 1870, and since that time its graduates are found in active service from Maine to Mexico, and from New York to San Francisco. But their work is chiefly in the southern states.



REV. T. M. NIXON.

The institution is strictly missionary in spirit and Christian in principle. Young men go forth from it under the watchful eye of Almighty God, and the unerring leadership of the Holy Ghost, cognizant of the needs of the race and fully determined by the grace of God to supply them. The meaning of success in the ministry is quite different from that of any other profession. For instance, a graduate from the law, medical and college departments is said to be successful in proportion as he is able to build up commerce, control business, accumulate property or acquire wealth. But not so with the minister of the gospel. As the Bible puts it, he is the most successful who is the greatest servant. His success lies, not in the amount of cents and dollars he can accumulate, but in the number of souls he can win from error and destruction to truth and righteousness. No man works harder and is more poorly paid than the faithful minister.

In a certain church out West, the pastor's salary ran considerably behind. His house rent was going unpaid. His pantry was already empty, and his wife and children were suffering for want of food and clothing. He went to the chairman of the trustee board several times for his money; but the chairman had the reputation of being close-fisted even in church affairs. When the good pastor told him that he wanted his money, the chairman said: "Money?" "Yes," replied the pastor. "I need it." The chairman said, "I didn't know you were preaching for money. I thought you were preaching for souls." The good minister replied, "I am preaching for money, but if I were preaching for souls it would take a thousand such as you are to make a meal."

So it is with the world. Though ministers work hard, often sacrificing their health and all they have, the great majority of the people whom they serve, feel that they can get along without money. So the Theological Department of Howard University has not exerted a financial influence in the

world, but a moral and spiritual. For the distinctive work of the ministry is to make men. To make them good—good in the absolute and in the concrete—good in every sense in which the word can be used.

Shall we stop there? Nay; for their business is to make men better. They put them in position to enjoy the real and only good in this life and the best there is to be had in the life to come. The young men that have gone out from Howard University have striven to do all this, and their labors have not gone without their due reward.

The few examples that I have given are sufficient to show the widespread influence and the substantial character of the work done by the men of the Theological Department of Howard University. Its influence has not been spasmodic, but it has been gentle and constant. Not like a stagnant pool, but like the beautiful riverlets that find their way down the mountain sides, always refreshing, always new. It has flowed like a peaceful river throughout the length and breadth of our land. The influence of this department may be compared to a great wagon wheel. The department itself being the hub and spokes, diverging in every direction representing its men who have gone into every corner of the world preaching the gospel. Its rim may be compared to the never failing influence, circumscribing these men; for it is a circle and, like the circle of God's love, its center is anywhere, and its circumference everywhere. In running this great gospel train, they have ever kept their hands upon the throttle and their eyes upon the rail.

In one of his orations, Cicero said that he did not desire a monument of wood or stone, or iron, but that he desired to erect a monument in the minds of the people of Rome; and by long and persistent effort he has not only succeeded in leaving his imprint upon the minds of Rome, but he has implanted himself in the minds and hearts of every generation of the literary world down to the present time. So it is with this department, it does not seek to perpetuate itself in wood or stone, or iron, for all these will decay—they will crumble and fall, but it is seeking and finding a way into the hearts and minds of the good and thoughtful.

The founders of the institution have planted it upon principles that are teeming with life and of infinite duration. The professors who have carried on the work have been, and are men of great missionary zeal and liberal culture—men filled with the spirit of goodness, with the spirit of Christ. Socrates said that he had rather suffer wrong than do wrong. So it is with the soldiers of the cross prepared by the good people of Howard University. They are meek—they are humble; like David, made after God's own heart—but they are men. And like Paul, they are not only ready to be bound at Jerusalem for him, or in Africa, America or the isles of the sea, but they are ready also to die for the glorious cause in which their Master died—but in which he is alive forevermore.

The character of the work which they are doing is such as can be done by no other calling. For they are fishers of men. To make men better and to save them is a work that no legislation can perform, however wise or however legal. No political scheme, laid ever so well, can satisfy cravings of the soul of man, for the soul is a thing that looks for God. No social problem can find a solution sufficiently great to completely change the downward tendency of man. It requires a free and unlimited use of God's word. Three notable principles characterize the men of Howard: Agitation, consecration and concentration.

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